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April 23, 2025 Testimony in Support of LD 1451: An Act to Strengthen Coordination of Community Transportation

Greetings Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Noel Bonam, and I am the State Director for AARP Maine.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony today.

Today I am testifying in support of LD 1451 *An Act to Strengthen Coordination of Community Transportation*. This legislation is crucial for maximizing the efficiency and performance of human services transportation in Maine, ultimately benefiting the health and economic well-being of our state.

How can we get the greatest return on investment for Maine's transportation dollars and provide the most access to people and communities across the state? The answer lies in coordination. In 2023, Maine spent \$206 million on community transportation, which includes rides for older adults, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, and others who are not driving themselves. This expenditure breaks down into significant investments in public transportation, Non-Emergency Medical Transportation funded through MaineCare, and various transportation services funded by state departments. By adopting best practices in coordination, we can ensure that these funds are used more efficiently, reducing waste and improving service delivery.

Coordination in community transportation offers significant benefits. It leads to cost savings by making more efficient use of existing resources, minimizing waste from multiple vehicles, excessive contracts, and administrative overlap. Greater efficiency in transportation services means better outcomes for consumers, including fewer missed medical appointments and higher satisfaction with transportation services. In states and regions with strong inter-agency coordination and Mobility Management, these positive outcomes are already being realized.

LD 1451 will strengthen Maine's capacity to maximize efficiency and performance of human services transportation. This bill advances state-level interdepartmental coordination, as recommended by strategic plans from the Coordinating Council on Access

and Mobility and MaineDOT. It supports the adoption of regional Mobility Management Hubs, building on existing efforts to meet community needs. By leveraging additional federal funding, LD 1451 will enable Maine to make more efficient use of current resources and access funds that are currently being left on the table.

A 2024 survey reveals that 40% of Maine adults experience transportation insecurity, struggling to access needed services or destinations comfortably, conveniently, and affordably. LD 1451 will help address this issue by promoting coordination and leveraging investments to improve transportation access for all Maine residents. There is no need for Maine to wait to start coordinating. The cost allocation model for splitting payment between payers has been developed and is in use by other states. Community organizations and transportation stakeholders in Maine agree that regional Mobility Management Hubs are a low-cost solution that can be adapted to all regions of the state. This approach will include a Mobility Manager, whose job it is to both facilitate community-driven solutions and help individuals get where they need to go.

In conclusion, LD 1451 represents a significant step forward in improving community transportation in Maine. By adopting coordination practices, we can achieve cost savings, greater efficiency, and better outcomes for our residents. I urge you to support LD 1451 and help us advance coordination in Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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AARP Maine State Director

